

Taking a Comprehensive Approach to Reducing Gun Violence

From his time as a prosecutor in West Baltimore—through his tenure as a city councilman, mayor, and now as governor—Martin O'Malley has fought to protect families and drive down violent crime.

As mayor of Baltimore, he worked with men and women of law enforcement to drive down violent crime by about 40%. That was among the largest drops in violent crime of any big city in America at the time. And Maryland has made tremendous progress during the O'Malley-Brown years as well: violent crime, homicides and property crime have been driven down to 30-year lows.

But there is always more we can do. That's why the O'Malley-Brown Administration worked with the General Assembly to enact a comprehensive plan of common sense reforms to make people safer. It includes (1) gun safety; (2) mental health safeguards and services; and (3) school safety measures.

On gun safety, the O'Malley-Brown Administration's plan:

- bans the sale of military-style assault weapons;
- limits magazine capacity to 10 rounds (previous limit was 20);
- requires licensing, fingerprinting, and safety training to purchase a handgun;
- makes it a crime to use armor-piercing bullets in a crime of violence;
- requires reporting to law enforcement of lost or stolen firearms;
- bars persons who receive probation before judgment for violent crimes from possessing firearms;
- establishes a single automated gun application process between gun dealers and the Maryland State Police; and
- prohibits persons who cannot lawfully possess firearms from possessing ammunition.

On mental health, the O'Malley-Brown Administration's plan:

- creates safeguards to keep guns away from people who may be dangerous to themselves or others due to mental illness;
- facilitates unprecedented levels of information sharing among federal and state partners for background checks;
- improves mental health services in Maryland;
- establishes a Center for Excellence on Early Intervention for serious mental illness;
- expands Maryland's Crisis Intervention Teams, Crisis Response Services, and Mental Health First Aid; and
- establishes a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene-led Task Force to Improve Continuity of Care for Individuals in the Community Mental Health System.

On school safety, the O'Malley-Brown Administration's plan:

- dedicates \$25 million of school construction dollars for school security enhancements;
- establishes a Maryland Center for School Safety; and
- ensures that the Maryland State Department of Education will work with the State Police to review all school district emergency plans to identify and address any gaps.

The right balance between protecting families and safeguarding our Second Amendment rights:

- The law: does not prohibit lawful citizens from obtaining or owning a handgun; does not require additional licensing procedures for hunting rifles and shotguns; does not force citizens who lawfully possessed an assault weapon prior to the bill's passage to surrender their weapon or to register it; and does not require current lawful gun owners to retroactively obtain a license.

What others are saying:

- "From a law enforcement perspective, we know that common sense reforms like requiring licenses to purchase handguns work. I applaud Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly for taking these important steps to make Maryland's families safer." -- Jim Johnson, Chief of the Baltimore County Police Department, and Chair of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence
- "Governor O'Malley has a history of driving down violent crime by focusing on strategies that work. I commend the Governor and the General Assembly for focusing on common sense initiatives that will make our families, our neighborhoods, and our communities safer." -- Prince George's County State's Attorney Angela Alsobrooks